United Nations S/2000/824

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 August 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 22 August 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text of the statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 22 August 2000 concerning the situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex urgently distributed as a document of the Security Council in time for the Council's open briefing on the subject on 24 August 2000.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Lavrov**

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Annex to the letter dated 22 August 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

On 17 August, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Bernard Kouchner, and the Commander of the multinational peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR), Mr. Juan Ortuño, unilaterally adopted a joint declaration on the status of UNMIK and KFOR and their personnel in Kosovo.

What that amounted to was a de facto self-proclamation of such status without any form of agreement with the lawful Yugoslav authorities, which obviously runs counter to the norms of international law and constitutes another gross violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which expressly reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. The claims that UNMIK and KFOR are supposedly authorized to determine their own status are improper and cannot justify that step.

The generally recognized practice of deploying peacekeeping operations requires the signing of appropriate agreements with the host country. In this case, the host country is the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which has repeatedly stated its readiness to begin consultations on the status of international presences in Kosovo. It is also surprising that even the United Nations Security Council, the organ which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, was not properly informed about that step.

Moscow believes that the so-called "document" adopted by Mr. Kouchner and Mr. Ortuño is dangerous and harmful from the political point of view. Its form and content basically run counter to the fundamental provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, even though it is incumbent on the leaders of UNMIK and KFOR to ensure strict compliance with that resolution. By acting as they have done, they assume serious responsibility for the possible consequences and endanger the implementation of the entire international operation in Kosovo.

22 August 2000